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SUBJECT: KADHAMIYA WOMEN'S PRISON UPDATES

REF: A. BAGHDAD 1532
[1](#)B. BAGHDAD 1892

Classified By: Deputy PolCouns Ellen Germain for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)
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[1](#)1. (S): SUMMARY: Following up on previous reporting about conditions at Kadhamiya Women's Prison, PRTOffs visited the detention facility on June 15 and were able to see some of the concerns first-hand. Embassy officials met on June 15 with CoR member Nada Ibrahim (Hewar) and Masha'el Haider Hassoun (strictly protect), the female prosecutor of the prison. The two women conveyed their concerns about the safety of the female detainees and the security of the facility. ICITAP officials have identified an alternative facility within the secure Rusafa Rule of Law Complex that can house the 164 detainees at Kadhamiya. Although Deputy Minister of Justice Posho does not believe the reports about Kadhamiya prison's poor conditions, he was receptive in a July 3 meeting to the idea of transferring the women to Rusafa. Acting Minister of Justice Dr. Safa al-Safi also told Minister of Human Rights Wijdan Salim on June 26 that he is in favor of the transfer. On June 26, the Second National Police executed four arrest warrants for the warden and three guards at Kadhamiya prison; the men are currently being held at the National Police Division Headquarters. There are 12 more warrants for guards at the prison. END SUMMARY.

CONDITIONS OF THE FACILITY

[1](#)2. (C) The Ministry of Justice (MoJ)-run Kadhamiya Women's Prison in Baghdad is in a state of disrepair and is infiltrated by a local militia (ref A). PRTOffs visited the site on June 15 to follow-up on previous reports. They found the facility in a poor physical condition that cannot be quickly rehabilitated. The location of the facility contributes to militia infiltration in the prison, as it is directly on the street in a militia-controlled neighborhood. The security guards and other workers outside and inside the prison were not wearing uniforms or nametags. The detainees complained to PRTOffs of a lack of food, medical care, social workers, legal aid, and education and vocational programs.

[1](#)3. (C) After the visit, Embassy officials met with CoR member Nada Ibrahim (Hewar) and Masha'el Haider Hassoun (strictly protect), the female prosecutor of the prison. Masha'el gave further information about the facility, especially concerning the rampant militia infiltration, which she guessed impacted 50% of the entire staff. She said the head of a militia in Shula neighborhood, known as "Abu Zahra," used to visit the prison daily, during the day and at night. He was served lunch at the prison by the guards, had free use of the prison's car, and used the prison as a second home. She added that since GOI operations in Sadr City, however, he has not visited. She added that he threatened to kill the previous warden, a female named Faiza, if she came to work. She left the prison, and the current warden is Zodon Jafar Siki, who is believed to be associated with Jaysh al-Mehdi (JAM) (ref A). Masha'el said Zodon was not a JAM member but out of fear of JAM, does not restrict their activities. She said male guards and militia members enter

the facility at night and even during the day, and she accused the female guards of facilitating entrance for these men in every room of the prison.

14. (C) Masha'el reiterated Nada's previous concerns about the state of the building, the dangerous location of the building, and the inadequate facilities. She said the women were in desperate need of good medical care and basic necessities like food. The Ministry of Justice pays the food contractor \$1.70 per day for each woman, and Masha'el claimed that the contractor, who is associated with JAM, steals half the money and gives the women low quality food, sometimes infested with insects. She said the prison needs social workers and facilities to take care of the 18 babies and children living with their mothers.

A NEW SITE?

15. (C) The International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) has a strong advisory presence at Ministry of Justice facilities, especially at the Rusafa Rule of Law Complex (ROLC). ICITAP advisors have identified a building within the secure Rusafa ROLC that could house the female detainees if transferred. The site, Rusafa 6B, would be a more secure alternative to the Kadhamiya facility. The building has a capacity of 250; extra space could be used for programs and a nursery. The site would also receive benefits from being at Rusafa ROLC, such as being in a secure complex, ICITAP presence, and a reliable and honest food contractor. Female Iraqi Correctional Officers (ICOs) could be assigned to the new facility and would benefit from daily ICITAP monitoring. ICITAP would help train new female ICOs to guard

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the prison, including giving training on human rights issues.

16. (C) Embassy officials proposed such a transfer to Deputy Minister of Justice Posho on July 3, who was receptive to the idea. He has told us previously that there are no problems at the Kadhamiya facility and that the MoJ was already building a new facility for the female detainees next to the old prison. (Note: The MoJ is in fact in the initial stages of building the new facility. End Note.) Posho said while they could transfer the female detainees, they would still build the new facility and turn it into a male detention facility upon completion. Upon urging by PolOff, Minister of Human Rights Wijdan Salim asked Acting Minister of Justice Dr. Safa al-Safi (who has not been very cooperative towards USG officials) on June 26 if he would agree to transferring the detainees to this site in Rusafa. Ironically, Safa said it was a good idea, as long as it was not an American idea, and he would confer with Posho. Nada Ibrahim will also meet with Posho in the coming week to describe the current situation at the prison.

RECENT ARRESTS BY MOI

17. (S) The warden, Zadon, and three guards were arrested on June 26 by the Iraqi Second National Police under the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and are being held at the National Police Division Headquarters detention facility. There were 12 other arrest warrants for other guards who were not on duty. According to Nada Ibrahim, they were arrested on murder charges. The Major Crimes Task Force (MCTF), a USG and GOI law enforcement agency, already had warrants for eight guards but has not yet acted on them (ref B). (Note: The warrants the National Police acted on are not the same as the MCTF warrants. End Note)

18. (C) COMMENT: After visiting the facility and hearing directly from the prosecutor, the best solution seems to be relocating the prison to a more secure site. The site at Rusafa Rule of Law Complex, which would be guarded by female ICOs trained in human rights standards, could be a model example for female prisons. Post will work with Deputy Minister Posho on details of a transfer. If the PM appoints

a helpful permanent Minister of Justice, there will be few obstacles to the transfer. One strong possibility is Dara Noor Al-Deen, who was a member of the Governing Council in 2003 and was very cooperative with the USG. The recent arrests at the prison by the MoI are positive steps in addressing problems of militia infiltration, but a new facility is still necessary.

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